

in Canada, or was acquainted with the facts, but in any case I want to assure him that in the month of October last year there was also a stock market crash in this Dominion, and the crash had identically the same effect here that it had in the United States.

Let me refer for a moment to the returns of unemployment, giving statistics to show the difference between conditions in Canada and in the United States. Those figures were dwelt on to-day by the right hon. Prime Minister. I am always wary of the glib use of statistics. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour took 1926 as a basis, but we do not know what that basis is. We have never yet been told of the different ways in which these statistics are collected here and in the United States. In Canada we collect statistics for industries which give more or less steady employment, and we leave out altogether agriculture and many other seasonal occupations; consequently the statistics furnished by the Department of Labour give no true indication of the amount of unemployment. I think it is most unfortunate that while the Department of Labour deals with the question of the number of people employed in industry, and talks of peaks of employment, we are given no information regarding peaks of unemployment. I feel very strongly, Mr. Speaker, that if to-day we had the true figures of unemployment in the Dominion it would show one of the most severe unemployment periods that we have had to face in the past twenty-five years. I am speaking now with some personal knowledge, having gone into the various cities in Canada and mixed with my colleagues in the labour movement, and wherever I have gone I have found the same cry: We have one of the worst unemployment situations to meet that we have ever had to handle. But the government fold their arms and say: We can do nothing; it is entirely a problem for others to grapple with! The Minister of Labour proceeded to say that crop conditions were bad in Canada, and he also stated that conditions in agriculture are abnormally depressed. This would go to show that the figures given by the Department of Labour are not reliable in regard to disclosing the true situation of unemployment in this country, because the two statements which I have just referred to are self contradictory. You cannot have the basic industry of this country depressed, as agriculture is depressed at the present time, without all other industries feeling the effects of that depression.

But what cure is proposed by the Minister of Labour for this condition of affairs? Well, he has no cure. He makes this rather extraordinary statement. I term it extraordinary because when men and women are out of work and crying for bread they expect something more than mere statistics from the government. Statistics do not feed empty stomachs. The Minister of Labour also makes this statement:

The calling of a conference might react unfavourably on existing economic conditions, at least psychologically. It will be recalled that in the United States conference a suggestion was made that the workers should agree among themselves not to secure higher wages. Personally I do not think that present circumstances warrant action in asking the workers of this country to agree not to seek higher wages.

Now, the Minister of Labour talks about "economic conditions." I suppose when he so talks he presumes to know something about economics. Well, if there is one thing which he ought to know it is this: when you have hundreds of thousands of men and women out of work, those in employment cannot ask for higher wages. That is a fact which goes without contradiction. Well, he tells the workers of this country that one of the reasons why he does not call an economic conference is that he does not want to tie their hands in demanding higher rates of pay! But the calling of a conference would not of necessity be for the purpose of demanding higher pay. Such a conference, I should think, would be for the purpose of devising ways and means to provide work of some kind for the men and women who to-day find themselves without employment. But the Minister of Labour washes his hands entirely of that responsibility. I wish to say this: if our Department of Labour has no interest in the question of unemployment in the Dominion why does it exist at all? I believe that the chief function of a department of labour is to deal with important labour questions, and there is no problem more important to labour than the problem of unemployment. These men who at various times have appealed to the Department of Labour have been turned down; they have been told that so far as the government are concerned they can do very little for them. In fact the Minister of Labour says: There is no unemployment problem; but if it exists, it is unwise to discuss it; for it might have a very bad psychological effect upon the man who is out of work or the man who is earning \$12 per week. It reminds me very much of the ostrich; when it sees a storm coming up it buries its head in the